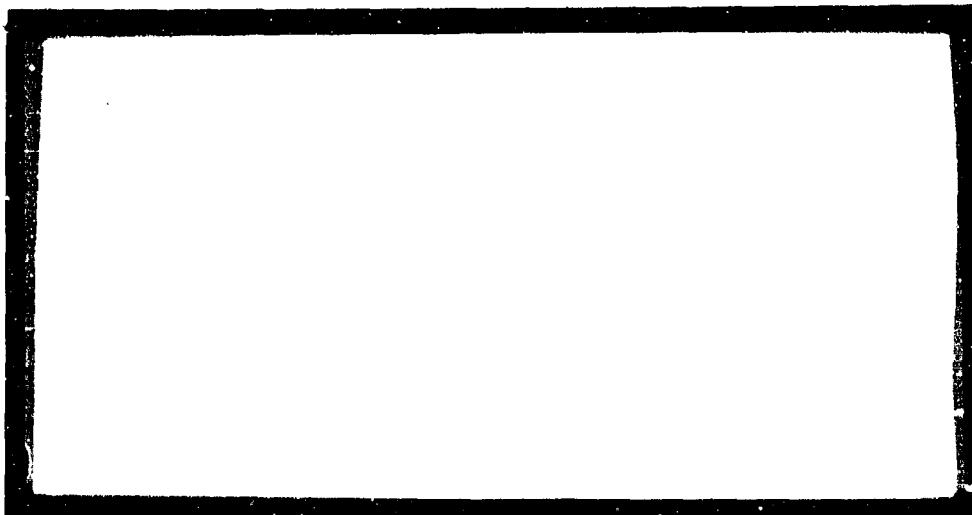


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PERSONNEL TECHNOLOGY

AN EXAMINATION OF HISPANIC AND GENERAL POPULATION
PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS
(Harry C. Triandis, Principal Investigator)

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Mainstream recruits were equally willing to sacrifice (take a loan, sell own TV, borrow) to be present at a family crisis (e.g. brother died) but the Hispanics were more willing than the Mainstream to sacrifice to be present in family celebrations (e.g. nephew is being baptized). The sharpest differences indicated that Hispanics were more willing than Mainstream recruits to sacrifice to attend celebrations involving second and third degree relatives. Thus the boundaries of the Hispanic family are broader than the boundaries of the Mainstream family. The significance of these findings for the Navy is that the meaning of celebrations involving higher order family members is sharply different between Hispanics and Mainstream recruits. This could lead to ill feelings when requests for leave to attend a celebration involving a second or third degree family member are rejected by the Navy.

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Dimensions of Familism among Hispanic and Mainstream Navy Recruits

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The literature concerning Hispanics in the United States provides a remarkably consistent picture of Hispanic emphasis on the family and kinship. However, there are questions raised about the extent to which this emphasis, which has been labeled familism, can be found among more modern urban, and educated Hispanics. The present report examines data concerning similarities and differences between Hispanic and Mainstream Navy recruits on this variable.

Many authors state that the family, which refers to both the nuclear and extended family, is the single most important institution in Hispanic culture. This significant role of the family has been documented for Mexican Americans (e.g., Alvirez & Bean, 1976; Gonzalez, 1967; Knowlton, 1973; Madsen, 1973; Mead, 1953; Murillo, 1976), Puerto Ricans (e.g. Glazer & Moynihan, 1963; Landy, 1959; Manners, 1956, Mintz, 1956), Cubans (Fox, 1973; Gil, 1976; MacGaffey & Barnett, 1962; Rogg, 1974; Szapocznik, 1980), and Central and South Americans (e.g., Cohen, 1979; Szalay, Ruiz, Strohl, Lopez & Turbyville, 1978). In fact, some authors (e.g., Brussell, 1971; Meier & Rivera, 1972) have argued that it is the significance Hispanics place on the family that is the single most important characteristic that distinguishes Hispanics from Anglos.

Familism is usually described as including a strong identification with the family, great importance being assigned to the nuclear and the extended family, the presence of mutual help and obligations, and strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity among members of one same family. Obligations to kin are taken seriously and there is a high level of mutual aid among relatives (Achor, 1978; Aguilar, 1979; Gonzalez, 1967; Goodman & Beman,

1968; Heller, 1968). In fact, mutual aid among family members has been proposed by various authors (e.g., Cohen, 1978; Rumbaut & Rumbaut, 1976; Szalay et al., 1978) as one of the reasons for the relatively trouble free adaptation of Hispanics to the United States.

The strong identification with the family by Hispanics and the level of support and help family members receive from their kin has been characterized among other things as the strongest source of emotional support for Mexican Americans (Achor, 1978; Heller, 1968; Keefe, Padilla & Carlos, 1978, 1979; Murillo, 1976) and as a possible explanation for the low numbers of Cuban heroin addicts in Miami (Szapocznik, Scopetta & King, 1978).

Differences in familism between Hispanics and Anglos has been documented by Grebler, Moore & Guzman (1970) and by Holtzman, Diaz-Guerrero & Swartz (1975) where Hispanics expressed their concern for the welfare of the family to a greater extent than Anglos. Nevertheless, Chandler (1974) has shown that the significance of familism to Hispanics is related to age so that only the older (more traditional) Hispanics are the ones who assign such importance to this and other more "traditional" Hispanic values. Farris and Glenn (1976) have also shown how some Hispanic values are closely associated with the educational level of the respondents although familism was found by these authors to be independent of the educational achievements of the subjects.

The extension of kinship ties by means of compadrazgo, or godparenthood, is also frequently discussed for all Hispanic groups. Fictive kinship established by means of religious ritual adds participating members to a given kin network (Lewis, 1964), and has been documented for Mexican Americans (e.g., Achor, 1978; Clark, 1959; Heller, 1968; Henderson, 1979, Madsen, 1973) and Puerto Ricans (e.g., Fitzpatrick, 1971; Mizio, 1974; Padilla, 1964; Safa, 1974; Wells, 1969).

Nevertheless, several writers have emphasized aspects of change in Hispanic families and argue that familism is on the decline (e.g., Montiel, 1973). In the Mexican American study of Grebler et al. (1970), for example, they found that relations between members of extended families were diminishing. They claim that compadrazgo was only a minor feature of urban life. The Steward (1956) study emphasized the point that familism varies with socio-economic class in Puerto Rico. Landy (1959), in an earlier study, noted that the extended family ties in one community were partially disintegrating and ritual kinship ties were becoming increasingly attenuated.

In summary, the literature is remarkably consistent in attributing familism to Hispanic culture and Hispanics interviewed in a number of the studies also stated that they felt that they placed more importance on family ties than Anglos. Yet a number of studies point to changes in these traditional values, attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Knowlton, 1965). The extent of this change, however, is not clearly discernable in the literature.

Method

Subjects

Seventy-three Hispanics and 81 Mainstream recruits responded to the questionnaire while being classified into Navy jobs, as part of a larger study of their perceptions of the social environment. In each of the three Navy recruit stations (Florida, California, and Illinois) when a Spanish-surname recruit was to be classified, the classification officer checked the recruit's self-identification on an application form on which "Hispanic" was one of the ways in which the applicant could describe himself. If the Spanish-surname recruit had selected the "Hispanic" self-identification label, he was asked to complete the questionnaire. At that time another recruit (with a non-Spanish surname) was randomly selected and given the same questionnaire. These

other recruits are here referred to as "Mainstream" and will include both whites and blacks as well as Hispanics who did not identify themselves as "Hispanic."

Instruments

A group of ten Hispanics and ten Anglos were asked to freely generate family-related events in which they would feel their presence to be expected or desired, by members of their nuclear and extended family. These events were then listed (with synonyms being deleted) and given to six Junior High School Hispanic students to test the comprehension level of the items.

The instrument administered to the Navy recruits consists of 19 hypothetical situations involving family crises (illness, death) or celebrations (wedding, birthday) that required the respondent's presence. Each subject was asked to assume that the event was to take place and that he had no money to travel to the event, unless he made a sacrifice (e.g., take a loan, sell his TV, borrow). Each event was followed by four sacrifice responses and by the alternative "I would do none of these." Chi-square analyses noted the significant differences in the frequencies of the Hispanic and Mainstream responses concerning sacrifices in order to participate in family events.

Results

There are four kinds of events: (1) crises, (2) celebrations, (3) events involving first degree family members (father, mother, wife, daughter) and (4) events involving second or higher degree family members (brother, niece, etc.). Table 1 presents the 19 events and the expressed willingness to make a sacrifice in order to attend the event on the part of Hispanic and Mainstream respondents.

Hispanics were more willing to sacrifice in order to attend celebrations than were Mainstream individuals. Specifically, Hispanics were more willing than Mainstream individuals to take a loan to attend a sister's wedding

($p < .004$), niece's wedding ($p < .02$), nephew's baptism ($p < .0002$), son's baptism ($p < .006$), brother's baptism ($p < .05$), parents' wedding anniversary ($p < .05$), mother's birthday ($p < .006$), father's birthday ($p < .006$) and to spend time with an aunt that is visiting from abroad ($p < .04$).

Table 2 presents the distribution of agreements and disagreements between Hispanics and Mainstream respondents in the 19 events included in the questionnaire. Fourteen of the 19 events produced a statistically significant difference. Two of the 14 significant differences were in the direction of the Mainstream respondents being more willing to sacrifice than the Hispanics, while 12 were in the direction of the Hispanics being more willing to make the sacrifice than the Mainstream subjects. There was no difference between first and higher degree relatives, since the Hispanics were equally likely to indicate they would sacrifice to attend a celebration involving a higher degree relative as one involving a first degree relative.

Discussion

It appears then that for the most part both Hispanics and Mainstream respondents are equally willing to make a sacrifice in order to be present in a crisis situation within the family although Hispanics extend this willingness to celebrations with both the extended and nuclear family. Both groups are willing to sacrifice to attend crises events involving first degree relatives; but the Hispanics are much more willing to sacrifice to attend celebrations than the Mainstream respondents. Thus the Hispanic familism is more "extended" in the area of happy events (celebrations) while there is no difference in the area of sad events (crises).

It seems then, at least as reflected by these data, that the most significant difference between Anglos and Hispanics in terms of familism resides on the fact that Hispanics perceive family obligations and family-related sources of emotional support as extending into happy social events while Anglos

limit them to sad (crisis) events. The differences found in these data are interesting not only because they clarify the dimensions of familism in terms of their extension to celebrations and the extended family, but also because our Hispanic respondents are not the typical rural, extremely poor informers used in most previous reports on familism. While it is probably true that the nature of familism is changing as a function of modernization and acculturation (Carlos, 1973), it is important to discover here that the essence of this cultural value remains as a significant concern to Hispanics.

The importance of the data for the Navy is that the meaning of celebrations, particularly those involving higher order family members, is sharply different between Anglos and Hispanics. One can imagine a situation where a Hispanic asks for a leave of absence to "visit with his aunt who has come from abroad" and the Mainstream officer in disbelief rejects the request, creating considerable ill-feelings. What appears to be happening here is that for Hispanics, celebrations, even those involving relatively remote family members, are of much greater importance than for Anglos. For Hispanics the psychological distance between themselves and their family members is relatively small, even in the case of third degree relatives. One way to communicate this to a Mainstream individual is to indicate that for a Hispanic the marriage of a niece may be psychologically as important as the marriage of a daughter is to an Anglo.

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Table 1

**Expressed Willingness to make a Sacrifice in Order to Attend Particular Event
(in percentages, decimals omitted)**

<u>Event</u>	<u>(Mainstream (N=81))</u>	<u>Hispanics (N=73)</u>
Your father has died	50	46
Your mother has died	55	48
Your father became seriously ill	47	40
Your wife died	45	42
Your brother died	46	46
Your sister is getting married	26	33
Your daughter is getting married	43	38
Your niece is getting married	14	25
Your nephew is being baprized	07	21
Your son is being baptized	27	36
Your brother is being baptized	16	22
Your family is having a Christmas party	21	26
Your family is having a summer reunion	22	28
Your aunt from abroad is visiting	08	17
Your family is having 4th of July party	10	14
It's your parents' wedding anniversary	23	31
It's your mother's birthday	23	32
Your mother is seriously ill	50	45
It's your father's birthday	18	26

Table 2

**Distribution of Similarities and Differences between Hispanic and Mainstream
Willingness to Sacrifice in order to Attend Family Events in Crises and
Celebrations**

		<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Celebration</u>	<u>Total</u>
Hispanics Statistically Significantly More Likely to Sacrifice than Mainstream	First Degree Relative	0	6	6
	Higher Degree Relative	0	6	6
Hispanics and Mainstream the Same	First Degree Relative	2	2	4
	Higher Degree Relative	1	0	1
Mainstream Statistically Significantly More Likely to Sacrifice than Hispanics	First Degree Relatives	2	0	2
	Higher Degree Relatives	0	0	0
Totals		5	14	19